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THE BRUCES IN IRELAND.

Visits of men to Ireland whose names are renowned in European history have been indeed "few and far between." In reviewing the whole period from the advent of Henry Fitz-Empress to Oliver Cromwell's conquest, the arrival of William the Third, and the landing of George the Fourth, no name assuredly excites a warmer admiration than that of Robert Bruce, the liberator of Scotland. Traces of the footsteps of such a man on the soil of our native land must hallow each spot in the eyes of Irish archaeologists. Although they leave it to the poet and historian to dwell with graphic eloquence on events which derive a glow of romance from the halo surrounding the name of Bruce, they do not fail to sympathise with their vivid descriptions of the stirring drama, and to enjoy with them the retrospective pleasure of peopling the scenes once more with living characters. It was no mean addition to the picturesque scenery of Leixlip, in the mind of him who wedded the melodies of Ireland to immortal verse, and flung the rich mantle of his genius over her obscure annals, to know that Robert Bruce and his companions in arms, the warriors of Bannockburn, had once stood beside that waterfall, and wandered in its green glen!^a It is now our wish to point to other places in Ireland which have been honoured by the same presence. In researches like these the antiquary is too often made to feel that, after all, he can only, like the astronomer, obtain a glance of distant objects through a misty glass. He can do little more than collect a few meagre and scattered details of information, and must be satisfied if he can elicit some glimmerings of truth amid the general darkness.

Our journal, dedicated to the archæologic service of Ulster, is so naturally the recipient of all that bears on the history of the province, that its pages welcome everything that illustrates the career of Edward Bruce, during his three years' expeditionary war in Ireland, the larger portion of which was fought in the North; and, also, that may throw light on the brief but more interesting visit of his regal brother. Minuteness and prolixity are privileges peculiar to antiquaries; who, therefore, need not offer an apology for exercising their prerogatives. Thus fortified, we proceed to make copious transcripts of all that bears on our theme in Archdeacon Barbour's metrical poem called "*The Bruce*;" a valuable, because nearly contemporary, narrative of the exploits of the hero and his adventurous brother. As this antique "History of Robert I. King of Scotland" appears to have been written so early as the year 1375, its archaic diction has prevented it from being known generally. From the ample account it gives of the campaigns and military proceedings of the Scots throughout Ireland, we have principally extracted the passages relating to Ulster, which are de-

^a History of Ireland, by Thomas Moore.

serving of notice, as throwing light on the early history of the province; for, though the foreign poet is not to be relied on in many points, (and on these we have referred to other authorities,) his verses contain some lively descriptions of the Gaelic mode of warfare, and several details illustrative of the mediæval state of the North. Having already given the paragraphs which bear on the local history of Carrickfergus, the episode of Bruce's siege of its castle may be passed over.

Eastern Ulster is described by Edmond Spenser as having been, previous to the Scottish invasion, a well-inhabited and prosperous English district; "having in the midst Knockfergus, Belfast, Armagh, and Carlingford," "which are now," says he, "the most out bounds and abandoned places in the *English pale*." "Robert de Bruce," wrote our author, "sent over his brother Edward with a power of Scots and Redshanks into Ireland, where, by means of the Lacies, and of the Irish, with whom they combined, they got footing, and, gathering unto him all the scatterlings and outlaws out of all the woods and mountains in which they had long lurked," despoiled and burnt the properties of the inhabitants, sacked and razed all the towns, and rooted all the Englishry out of the Ardes. This signal act of destruction, and the ravaging expeditions into the centre of Ireland, revenged the far greater havoc committed in Scotland under Edward I. and his successor, to whom, as Spenser observes, Robert Bruce's object was to do "all the scathe he could." The principal design of the King of Scotland was probably, however, less that of carrying war into the enemy's country than of directing the energies of his brother to the conquest of Ireland; for Edward Bruce, who was of a high courageous spirit, chivalrously ambitious of fame in fight, and aspiring to dominion, had fought abreast with his brother in establishing him on the throne of Scotland; on which he was scarcely firmly placed, when Edward demanded to be admitted to an equal share in his authority.^b In vain did the King confer his own hereditary earldom of Carrick upon his younger brother. Half the kingdom would not have sufficed; for, as Barbour declares in the opening verses of the expedition:—

"The Erle of Carick, Schyr Eduward,
That stoutar wes than a libbard,
And had na will to be in pess,
Thought that Scotland to litill wes
Till hys broder and hym alsua;
Tharfor to purpose he gan ta
That he of Ireland wuld be King."

The patriotic efforts made in Scotland to expel English invaders had been eagerly observed by the Gael of Ireland; and when that great national struggle was crowned with success, Donnell O'Neill, one of the principal Irish chieftains, and head of the great northern clan which was constantly foremost in resistance to foreign domination, came boldly forward to secure the aid of the heroic brothers,

^b Leland, quoting Fordun.

"Iste Edwardus erat homo ferox, et magni cordis valde, nec voluit cohabitare fratri suo in pace, nisi di-

midium regni solus haberet; et hac de causa motu fuit guerra in Hibernia."—Fordun, in Moore.

by whose exertions Scotland was now once more an independent kingdom; and, despatching envoys to Robert Bruce, solicited his assistance, and besought that if he could not come himself he would send his brother Edward to be king over the Gael of Ireland, and not suffer a kindred race to be oppressed any longer under the intolerable bondage of English rule.^d O'Neill may be said to have led this political movement, because his name heads the remonstrance addressed to Pope John by two-and-twenty of the native kings. In this remarkable appeal, they spoke as patriarchal representatives of their clans, and on behalf of all the Irish people; they described in bitter terms the heavy and repeated wrongs sustained from the Saxon invaders, and aggravated the long and grievous list by declaring they were driven to live among rocks, and in woods and morasses, and that the possession even of these barren wastes was disputed, so that there was no longer a spot that the arrogance of the strangers would allow them to call their own. They stated it to be the belief of all the laity among the Englishry, and of many of the churchmen, that there was no more sin in killing an Irishman than a dog. "Their monks," says this document, which was of course drawn up by Gaelic clerks, "boldly assert that, for having killed a man of our nation (which too often happens) they would not abstain one single day from saying mass. As a proof of this, the monks of the order of Citeaux, established at Granard, in the diocese of Armagh, and those of the same order at Ynes, in Ulster, daily attack in arms, wound, and kill the Irish, and yet regularly say mass. Brother Simon, of the order of Minorites, a relation of the Bishop of Connor, has publicly declared from the pulpit that there is not the slightest sin in killing or robbing an Irishman." They lamented that they were without a head to govern and lead them; for they felt that their want of a monarch made them powerless against a feudal foe; and, having determined to supply this cardinal deficiency, concluded by announcing that, for the purpose of working out their deliverance from a state of cruel subjection, they had called to their aid the illustrious Earl of Carrick, Edward de Bruce, a lord descended from the same ancestors as themselves; and had made over to him all the rights, which they themselves as rightful heirs of the kingdom possessed, thereby electing him King of Ireland.

The Irish chieftain, in thus offering sovereignty over his countrymen to De Bruce, may reasonably have expected that they might obey a renowned foreigner more unanimously than they would submit to his own claim to govern them. He was not himself without the ambition of being *Ard Righ* of Erin; since, in this celebrated address to the Pontiff, he styled himself lawful heir to the kingdom. Yet he, perhaps, more than most men, must have been aware that the cause which had rendered the Irish clans powerless to combine in defending their country from invaders, namely, their want of the federal bond of an hereditary feudal monarchy, was certain to neutralize their efforts against the common enemy, and to preclude them from agreeing to lay their independence at the foot of any man, so as to have that which in a political light they needed most, a strong government. O'Neill, thus ambitious, yet with little real hope either of being elected as *Ard Righ*, or of the permanent success of a powerful foreigner, will appear in the sequel to have been checked in his exertions

^d Buchanan.

by a prophetic consciousness of their futility; to have acted less as an enthusiastic encourager of the too sanguine Edward Bruce, than as a cautious and timorous counsellor; and to have led him to trust little to the "Hyrseroy of Irland:"—

"That in their leawté tuk on hand
Of all Irland to mak hym king,
With thy that he with hard fychting
Mycht ourcum the Inglismen,
That in the land war wonnand then."

The Irish were "to help" their intended liberator "with all thair mycht." History, however, usually supplies instances in which those who have assisted the endeavours of a subjected people to recover their freedom, have at last turned against men who had not the courage and unanimity to trust in their own swords.

A cotemporary Gaelic writer,* who observed that the *Eoghanachs* (that is the O'Neills and the rest of the Kinel-Eoghan) were the foremost to side with the Scots, blamed the Milesians generally for joining the "*Albanach* foreigners," in imitation of the *Eoghanachs*, "who first dealt treacherously by their own lords," on the occasion of the invasion, hereby implying that the O'Neills were vassals of the Earls of Ulster; and he declared it was unjust in the Irish chiefs to side with the foreigners who were "less noble," said he, "than our own foreigners;" an opinion he enforced by the following remarkable statement and reason;—"For," wrote he, "the old chieftains of Erin prospered under those princely English lords, who were our chief rulers;" and he declared that they had (with the well known proneness of the Normans to assimilation,) changed from foreign *hauteur* into displaying the popular national quality of a good-humoured and hospitable disposition. The general defection of the Irish is declared by this native penman, in oriental and expressive phraseology, to have made "Erin one trembling surface of commotion." Whether Donnell O'Neill owed allegiance either to the Earl of Ulster or the crown of England is uncertain. But his bold act of inviting Edward Bruce had the effect of emancipating himself and his successors from the Saxon yoke for three centuries.

Among the "Inglismen" who were to be "ourcum," were many either concealed or open abettors of the projected usurpation in the persons of such barons of Ulster and Meath as desired to free themselves from service to their suzerains, De Burgh and Mortimer, and from the regulated order of feudal lords, that they might revel in the rough license of Brehon usages. The first avowed traitor was John, Lord Bissett, who went over to Scotland, returned with the invading fleet, and led it to anchor in Glendun, a haven in the Bissett barony of the "Glynns." His posterity (for probably he was progenitor of the Anglo-Celtic chiefs styled Mac-Eoin, i.e. sons of John) so thoroughly discarded feudality that they reduced themselves to the insignificance of broken and pauperised septs. Another rebel of his name, Sir Hugh, also a baron of the realm, was either at first or last in league with the invaders, and, for that reason, forfeited his manor of Glenarm, and hereditaments in the isle of

* Tribes and Custome of Hy-Many, p. 136.

"Ratherin" or Rathlin. This rugged and solitary island had afforded shelter to Robert Bruce, in the year 1306, when he was yet but Earl of Carrick, and when his patriotic resistance to the English in Scotland had made him a proscribed man; so that Hugh Bissett, lord of the island, might, at the time

"The rebellious Scottish crew,
Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,
With Carrick's outlawed chief,"^f

were under his protection, have inspired their leader with the design of attempting the conquest of Ireland. The wished-for opportunity occurred when his brother, utterly discontented with the paternal earldom of Carrick, and finding many of the Scottish chivalry, who were flushed with their recent victories over the English and eager to win rich earldoms in a new land, asked, and easily obtained, the consent of the king "to gadre hym men of gret bounté," and lead them into Ireland. The famous Randolph, Earl of Murray, who had commanded the left wing of the army at Bannockburn, "the gude Sir Philip Mowbray, that sycker was in hard assay," Sirs John Soulis and Stewart, "the Ramsay of Ouchtre house," that was "wycht and chewalrouss," and Sir Fergus of Ardrossan, were the most distinguished of the nobles and "knychts many anc" who joined in the enterprise. These leaders, with 6,000 men, embarked in 300 gallies, sailed from Ayr on the 25th May, 1315, and, having landed in Wokings-fryth,^g "arywyt sauflly," sent their vessels home, determined, like the Greeks under the walls of Troy, to leave no means of retreat; for "a gret thing haff they undretane." With so inconsiderable a force did these adventurous knights undertake "to werray all Ireland."

"And forowt drede or affray,
In twa battaills tuk thair way
Toward Cragfergus, it tose.
Bot the lords off that countrè,
Mandweill,^h Besat,ⁱ and Logane,^j
Thair men asaemblyt euirilkane.
The Sawages^k war alsua thar,
And quhen thai assemblyt war,
Thar war well ner twenty thowsand."

The first encounter of the invaders was thus, according to the archdeacon, with an armed muster of the Englishry of the country, numbering nearly twenty thousand men. But our unmilitary bard has evidently, from a natural desire to aggrandise his heroes, greatly exaggerated the enemy's force in this and other instances; a failing that, with other errors, renders his narrative unreliable. In following his romance, therefore, for the sake of its many agreeable and lively touches, we have

^f Lord of the Isles.

^g The Scandinavian and Scotch name for Larne Lough, probably meaning the *Vik*, or *Wick*, *ings* firth.

^h Sir Thomas, Lord Mandeville, of "Mandeville's castle," who was slain by Edward Bruce in Carrickfergus.

ⁱ Besides the traitor Bissetts, there were other peers of

the name, who may have taken the loyal side.

^j Lord Logan was executed by Edward Bruce in Carrickfergus.

^k The family of Lord Savage was perhaps the most powerful of the Englishry. Some writers fancied this term "Savages" was given to the native Irish themselves.

corrected his story by such lights as our own chroniclers cast on this invasive expedition, an event which must be regarded as a remarkable and highly interesting episode in the life of the illustrious Bruce. Recurring to the antique poet's account, an engagement took place in which :—

“Mycht men se a gret mellé :
 For Erie Thomas, (‘ Randolph, ’) and hys menye,
 Dang on thair fayis sa douchtely,
 That in schort tyme men mycht se ly
 An hundre that all bloody war,
 For hobynys, that war stykyt thar,
 Relyt, and flang, and gret rowme mad.”

“Hobynys” were war-horses, or chargers; strong steeds that doubtless kicked and flung about when pierced with arrows and arblast bolts. Barbour, in most of his descriptions of battles, delights in representing the confusion caused by wounded horses. In this action, although the odds were “four for one” against the veterans of Bannockburn, they so bore themselves that—“In that battail was tane or slane all hale the flur of Ulyster.” With this “full fayr beginnyng,” the conquerors took possession of Carrickfergus, the largest town in the North, and important on account of its wealth, houses, walls, and facility of communication with Scotland. After the first truce was agreed upon between Bruce and the brave garrison of the castle, his men “plundered all Ulster,” (a name which then merely denoted the districts east of the Bann,) and soon began to suffer the effects of importing a large force into a half cultivated country, and of endeavouring to obtain supplies by rapine. The indispensable support that must have been expected from the native clans was also wanting. Every chieftain, being independent, was as unprepared to obey Edward Bruce as Edward Plantagenet. Moreover, commissariat, the grand difficulty in modern war, was an insuperable obstacle to combination. Upon the victory over the Englishry of Ulster, some ten or twelve Irish “kings of that countre” came to the camp of their new monarch. But the sequel tends to show that it was not the Gaels in general who either invited Bruce over, or were to be depended on for assistance; for, as the archdeacon, after stating that these chiefs made promises of fealty, remarks:—

“Thai held hym schort quhill their fay.”

Edward Bruce, unable to maintain even his own men in a country they were compelled to ravage, was quickly deserted by the native leaders. Forced by necessity to quit his desolated quarters rather than impelled by hopes of conquest, he determined to ride (in the words of the romance) forth farther into the land, in order to lead his troops into the unplundered Pale. Two of these faithless “kings” were the first to oppose their new liege in his march, by waylaying him with four thousand spearmen and archers in a forest pass near Newry, the key to the rich southern plains. Let us quote the verses relating to this act of these impeding chiefs :—

—“Ane Makgullane,
 And ane other hat Makartane,
 Withset a pass intill hys way,

¹ Grace.

Quhar hym belowyt ned away
 With twa thousand of men with spers,
 And als mony of thair archers.
 And all the catell of the land
 War drawyn thyddar to warrand,
 Men callys that place Innvermullane:
 In all Irland straytar is nane."

Invermullane had doubtless some ford in its water through which a passage could be made when marching through dangerous straits. In the year 1343, M^cArtan beset Sir Ralph Ufford, justiciary of Ireland, and husband of a widowed Countess of Ulster, in the straits of "Emerdullam," and, having slain some of his men, despoiled him of all valuables. This river passage seems to have been one of the hardest to force of all in the knot of easily-defended positions in the vicinity of Newry. One of these, in "Fedom," or the *fiodha*, (i.e. forest,) is significantly marked on an old map as "the Pass." Moyry Pass is stated in *Gough's Camden* to be "one of the most difficult passes in Ireland, formed by the influx of eight rivers, besides rivulets." Yet it is hardly credible that Maquillin of northern Antrim, and even M^cArtan of Kinelarty, should bring their clansmen so far south as the lower border of Louth to prevent the *Albanach* from invading the *Sassenach*. The poetic archdeacon of Aberdeen wrote from hearsay, and may have confounded the engagement at Invermullane with a previous encounter with these chieftains at some place nearer Carrickfergus, and within M^cArtan's country, on some occasion when they were defending their property from the necessitous invaders.

The valiant Randolph, who "put him fyrst ay till assayis," alighting, with his knights, from horseback, forced the perilous passage on foot, and drove out the enemy; whose herds of cattle, brought thither for safety, became a welcome booty; yet only lasted the Scottish host a week. Thus, so far from receiving aid, Edward Bruce had to fight his way through men he had reckoned on as allies; and was compelled to seize their principal wealth. After this long march and hard won passage, Bruce rested his men at a place on the southern border of Armagh:—

"At Kilsagart King Edward lay."

According to an interesting paper on Kilnasaggart, in the first volume of this Journal, the place is situated on the famous old road anciently called Miodhluachra, and near the junction of the present counties of Armagh and Louth. *Coill-na-sagart* signifies the priests' wood. The Englishry of the country which Bruce had now reached were gathered in force within the walls of Dundalk, and the Scots, marching on, drew up in array against the town, "with banners all displayit." A reconnoitering party sent out by the inhabitants returned, and declared to their great comfort that the Scots would be but "half a dinner" to them. But the assault was so vigorous that the "rewys," (*rues*, or streets,) flowed with the blood of dead defenders, and were soon cleared of all living by the assailants, who then made good cheer, having found "profusion of wictaill and great abundance of wine." Elated with this first success in the English Pale, the triumphant warriors crowned their leader King of Ireland

on a hill near the town, in the simple national form in which his brother had been inaugurated at Scone. Dundalk was stormed on the 29th June, 1315;^m and the Scots, perhaps hearing that the viceroy was about to march against them, quitted walls for woods, and, moving westward, reached a "gret forest :"—

"Kylose it hat, as Ik hard say."

This forest must have been the *Coill* or wood of "Castle-Ross," marked on old maps as lying on the southern bank of Lough Ross, in Monaghan. The poet gives a truthful sketch of Randolph's march to this wild place :—

"The Erle Thomas wes forouth ay,
And, as thai raid throw the countrè,
Thai mycht upon the hyllis se
Swa mony men, it wes ferly.
And quhen the Erle wold sturdely
Dress hym to theim with hys baner,
Thai wold fley all that theu war :
Swa that in fycht not ane abaid."

In this forest the Scots took "herbery" (or harboured themselves) as a central position where they might be joined by such of the Gaelic race as were ready to follow the patriotic example of the chieftain of Tyrone; who, with his clan, probably numbering some 3,000 fighting men, was already with them, and was Bruce's best ally and counsellor. An inactive month was spent in this expectation. Whilst still in the sheltering wood, a large army was seen moving past, led, as the scouts reported, by a former enemy, Richard De Burgh, the Red Earl of Ulster, who was seeking "Schyr Edward and his men." This puissant nobleman and able general had commanded the large contingent of Norman-Irish chivalry and troops that had served under Edward I. in Scotland; but, in 1302, Robert Bruce married a daughter of the earl, who, in 1309, aided in effecting a truce between his royal son-in-law and Edward II., the violation of which gave rise to the memorable war that resulted in Scottish independence. De Burgh, thus related to the King of Scotland, regarded the invasion in the light of a private quarrel; for the plundered vassals of Ulster were his: and, instantly taking arms to repel the invaders, he directed his first burst of rage on the chief instigator, O'Neill, whose territory, and the entire region from the Shannon to the Foyle, and from the Bann side to Coleraine,ⁿ he laid waste along the course of his march; perhaps expecting that the puny band of Scots would scarcely venture southwards, and hoping by such desolation to prevent them from seeking refuge from his vengeance in the fastnesses of the central North. Though marching in search of the invaders, he passed by without perceiving them; and, on approaching Ardee, was met by the Justiciary, Sir Edmond Butler, at the head of a well appointed army, the sight of which, according to the old annals, sorely angered him; and the veteran earl, whose proud spirit had not been chastened by age, in his interview with the viceregent, whom he had been accustomed to treat as

^m Grace.

ⁿ Annals, Clonmacnoise.

his inferior, haughtily declared that he and his men were sufficient to drive the Scots out, and undertook to deliver up their leader either alive or dead.^o The viceroy then withdrew, his real motive in retreating having probably been either that it was impossible to maintain two armies in the wasted North, or that he under-estimated the energy and valour of the Scots; as did the earl, whose vaunting promises proved signally futile. Bruce, acting under the counsel of his Gaelic associate, retreated rapidly, in order to draw the enemy into the defiles of Tyrone; and, "with his *Albanachs* and the *Eogh-anachs*," arrived at Inishkeen on the day the two Anglo-Irish hosts met near Ardee. On the following day the Red Earl, pushing in pursuit, reached Louth, and sent his cavalry forward, "on steedys trappit weill some all in iron and stele,"—led by his brother, a distinguished leader; when, on Bruce obtaining some advantage of position, a skirmish took place, magnified by the partial bard into a general engagement, in which his countrymen came off conquerors, and then (wrote he) returned to their forest harbourage; which, however, they would not have done, nor have gone into devastated countries, had they defeated the Red Earl.

Our metrical narrator now interposes the incident of "ane Irsche King," hight "Odymsy," inviting the martial new-comers "to see his land," where he undertook "na victaill" nor ought that might serve them should be wanting;—but on their arrival he inveigled them into bivouacking in a position in which he endeavoured to overwhelm them by breaking down a river-dam constructed for his treacherous purpose, so as to let the pent-up flood burst on them; a watery snare from which they narrowly escaped, some only by casting off their armour, and swimming for their lives. It was not, however, in the arid month of July, 1315, but in the ensuing rainy February, that they were in this inhospitable region, where, though water was abundantly dispensed, they suffered so severely from want of food that many perished.^p This anachronism corrected, let us follow Edward Bruce in retreat, and the Red Earl in hot pursuit. Thinned by war, and famishing with hunger, the Scottish band traversed the length of central Ulster, and reached Coleraine, directed thither in the hope of obtaining succour from their own country. On the approach of the earl, they broke down the bridge over the Bann, to prevent him from effecting a junction with his vassals on the eastern side of the broad river. But their design was frustrated; for De Burgh, an able and experienced general, who was apparently unprepared to assail them, and well knew that famine was the severest weapon in war, contrived to cross the river, and carried havoc into his own earldom; "holding on," wrote our native annalists, "the course of spoiling and destroying all places where he came; leaving neither field of corn undestroyed, nor town unransacked." To provide for his troops, however, he preserved much provisions, and stored them in the town of Connor; which immediately became the object of attack to the Scots, who now found themselves hemmed up by their own act:—

"In great distress, thar war thai stad,
For great default of mete thai had."

"Ane arm of the se," the wide river Bann, was betwixt them, their foes, and sustenance. At

^o Annals, Clonmacnoise.

^p Grace, 69.

length, "a scowmar of the see," a famous pirate, named Thomas of Down,^a "multarum navium depredator, subversor, et pirata crudelis de parte Scotorum," a countryman of their own, sailed in with four ships he had recently captured, and "set thaim" across. "And quhen thai com in biggit land," (that is where there were buildings), and into a district that had escaped devastation, they found ample provision :—

"And in a wood thaim herberyt thai;
Nane of the land wyst quhar thai lay."

De Burgh's army, also harbouring "in a forest syde," were supplied with provisions brought daily under escort from head-quarters, from whence they lay distant ten miles. Randolph, ever good at adventure, now surprised the enemy by a notable stratagem. Having intercepted both victual-bearers and escort, he dismounted and stripped them, put their clothes on his men, and advanced at dusk with his cavalry, preceded by his disguised soldiers and the pennon of the escort, towards the earl's army. A large party of these Englishry came forward to meet the victual-bearers, and were soon startled by shouts of the Scottish battle-cry from Randolph and his cavalry, who rushed upon them, and, chasing them back to the main body, strewed the field with more than a thousand slain. To prevent such loss for the future, De Burgh withdrew his troops into the town, taking the precaution to move in the night. This indicates some inferiority in numbers: yet, according to the poet, the earl's army included "all the chivalry of Ireland," namely, "the Butler, and Erls twa, off Desmond and Kildare," sons-in-law to the general, "Brynname" (Birmingham), "Weddan," (Verdon), "and Fyze Waryne; and Schyr Paschall off Florentyne, that wes a knyecht off Loambardy, and wes full off chewalry;" with the Mandevilles, Bissetts, Logans, Savages, and "Schyr Nycholl off Kylkenane." These lords commanded a force five to one more numerous than Bruce's, if the poet were to be believed; but he was in all likelihood as ignorant of the numbers of the enemy as of the names of their leaders. Certainly Sir Edmond Butler was not among them; nor probably either of the Geraldine lords. Some lords of Munster, however, were present; namely, Power, baron of Donisle, who "bore himself bravely, but lost nearly all his baggage;" and (Sir) George (Lord) Roche, and (Sir) Roger Holywood, of the county Meath, were wounded.^r The earl, perhaps on receiving a reinforcement, soon afterwards marched out to attack Bruce's position. The Scots, leaving their banners flying in the camp to decoy the enemy onwards, placed themselves in ambush, and fell suddenly on the flank of the advancing column. The confusion that ensued from this simple *ruse de guerre* resulted in victory to the wily strategists. Bruce and his gallant men then entered the town;—"that nycht thai war blyth and joly," and on the morrow bore off vast stores of corn, flour, wax, and wine, to Carrickfergus, which thenceforth became their head quarters. This battle was fought on the 10th September, 1315. The discomfited Earl of Ulster retired into Connaught, and was powerless to take arms again. His defeat filled all the Gael of the North with

^a Thomas Don was soon afterwards taken at sea by Sir John de Athy, with forty of his piratic crew, and their heads were sent to Dublin. Sir John was after-

wards constable of Carrickfergus castle, and admiral of the fleet in the Irish seas.—*Grace*, 88-9; *Clyn*, 13.

^r Grace.

exultation and hope; and they proclaimed the successful warrior their sovereign. Barbour states, in the "Argument" to "Buke XV.," that after this "ferd battle" the triumphant Bruce was "declarit King off Ireland." The poet also observes in a verse in the same "buke," that "Schyr Eduward" was usually spoken of and addressed by his followers by his regal title. This was whilst Bruce lay in Carrickfergus, which agrees with the statement of Hailes, who dates the coronation on the 2d May, 1316, when the pseudo-king was in this town. There are discrepancies as to when and where he was first invested with majesty. Archdall, in his peerage book,* says Bruce was crowned by the Irish, and that the ceremony took place at Knocknemelan, within half a mile of Dundalk. The annalist, Grace, says the Scottish invader was crowned by his men, without naming the place, yet mentioning the day as the 1st May, but making an obvious error as to the year. The probability is, that, after the first burst into the Pale, and the victory over the Saxons at Dundalk, the *Albanach* and *Erinach*, in their ardour of triumph, inaugurated Bruce in their national manner on a hill near the town.

No sooner had Edward Bruce some prospect of winning the throne of Ireland than a still brighter vista opened to him. When intelligence of his repeated successes reached the Welsh, then rebelling against their recently-imposed yoke, they sympathetically rejoiced in the belief that independence was being achieved for their Gaelic kinsmen, the *Erenach*, by the younger Bruce; as they had exulted when it had been secured for the *Albanach* by his heroic brother; and the principal chieftain of the *Branach* (Welsh) then in arms, eager to obtain the aid of one of these great champions of national freedom, invited Edward Bruce to join them, in order (wrote he) that by the united strength of the Albanian Scots and the native Britons, the usurping *Sassenach* might be driven out of England, the times of Brutus restored, and the whole land divided between the Britons and the Scots! The enterprising Sir Edward, whose successes had inflamed his ambition, accepted this proposition, as it promised him the sovereignty as soon as the projected conquest should be complete. He at once stipulated for as full authority over his future British subjects as their own princes had exercised. Brilliant visions these for the younger son of an Earl of Carrick! He might succeed to the throne of Scotland; half Ireland was already his, by Anglo-Irish treason and Gaelic will; and now the diadem of England awaited his grasp! Yet, though many of the Gael of Scotland were under his banner, and they of Ulster called him their king, and though they of Wales now asked his martial assistance, all three would assuredly have proved as impatient of the Norman and feudal Edward de Bruce as they had been of the "Hammer" of the Scottish nation.

Immediately after the victory of Connor the gallant Earl of Moray was despatched to Edinburgh, charged with earnest entreaty to King Robert from his brother, to join him in Ireland:—

"For, war thai both in to that land,
Thai suld fynd nane suld thaim withstand."

Young Randolph thus commissioned, sailed with four ships laden with spoils, and carried with

* Vol. III., p. 33. quoting Lodge's Collections.

him a distinguished hostage, Sir William De Burgh, uncle to the queen of Scotland. He was "gladsumely" welcomed on his arrival at court by the King Robert, whose nephew he was, and to whom he had been a right arm in placing him on the throne, as he was now engaged in valiantly endeavouring to raise Edward to another. When he had told all the story of the campaign in Ireland, the lion-hearted king declared he would go "blythely" to see "the affair of that countre and of thair war;" a promise, however, the exigencies of his kingdom precluded him for a whole year from fulfilling. Moray returned with a reinforcement of but 500 men, and landed at Dundalk, where he was met by his chief; who, with his forces, had quitted Carrickfergus on St. Nicholas's day, the 6th of December, leaving some troops to carry on the siege of the bravely-contested citadel: and, pushing forward into the centre of the country, kept Christmas in Ballymore-Loughsuedy, an island-fastness surrounded by the lakes and morasses of Westmeath.

(To be continued.)

THE SHAMROCK.

It is now many years since my attention was attracted by a passage in Herodotus [I. 132,] relating to the sacrifices of the ancient Persians. His account, indeed, is not very consistent; for he says that in sacrificing they used no fire, and yet he proceeds to speak of their cooking the flesh of the victim; which, he adds, they then placed on the softest herbs, "but particularly the trefoil;" *μάλιστα δὲ τὸ τρίφυλλον*. This word *τρίφυλλον* is evidently applicable to any of the numerous plants which have triple or ternate leaves. It is not to be limited to those particular plants which farmers and seedsmen commonly designate as *trefoils*.^a Now, this incidental mention by Herodotus of the trefoil led me to think if there could be any more remote origin than is commonly supposed for the regard paid in Ireland to the Shamrock. The common persuasion is, that St. Patrick, in preaching the doctrine of the Trinity to the pagan natives, employed the shamrock as a symbol or illustration of that mystery.

^a Dioscorides mentions five plants, at least, to which the name *Triphyllon* or *Trifolium* was applied. We annex the short description he gives of each, from which it will be seen that none of them agree with our Trefoil.

[Edit.]

"*Triphyllon*, which some call *Oxyphyllon*, others *Menyanthes*, *Asphallion*, and *Onicion*, and which the Romans call *Trifolium acutum odoratum*, is a shrub more than a cubit high, having slender black branches, and leaves like the *Lotus*, three springing from each bud. The smell of these when young resembles that of Rue, but, when full grown, that of bitumen. The flowers are purple." [Lib. 3, cap. 113.] The commentator, Sprengel, determines this plant to be the *Psoralea bituminosa*. Lin.

"*Satyrion*, which some also call *Triphyllon*, because it usually has ternate leaves, bent back towards the

ground. It has a naked stalk, a white liliaceous flower &c." [Lib. 3, cap. 133.]

"*Medion*, which some call *Medica*, others *Triphyllon*, *Clemation*, &c. and the Romans, *Trifolium odoratum*, grows in shady and rocky places. It has leaves like the *Seris*, a stem three cubits long, purplish flowers, large and round, &c." [Lib. 4, cap. 18.]

"The cultivated *Lotus*, which some call *Triphyllon*, *Tripodion*, and *Tribolion*, grows in gardens." [Lib. 4, cap. 109.] The Commentator determines this plant to be a species of *Melilotus*.

"The wild *Lotus*, which is also called *Libyon*, and *Lesser Triphyllon*, has a stem two cubits long, or more, its leaves resembling those of the three leaved *Lotus* which grows in meadows." [Lib. 4, cap. 110.]